

Rat Tails



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From Field to Table

If You're Going To Hunt Game Birds

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When Russ and I got our first IWS, we didn't plan on hunting. We got an IWS to be a boat dog, hiking companion, and friend. But after Cooper got some training for hunting tests, we discovered that we had a dog who lived to retrieve and was pretty handy out in the field.

So Russ decided to get back to his rural Colorado roots (figuratively – we live in Oregon), and get back into upland hunting.

It turns out that both Cooper and Tooey are good field dogs. Tooey excels at finding and flushing birds, and Cooper will always go out and bring them back. That means we've brought home quite a number of pheasants and chukars.

But it doesn't stop there. If you're going to hunt, you have to eat the birds you and your dogs bring home. That's the rule.

When we get home from a day in the field, I usually spend my time brushing all the debris out of the dogs' coats,

Russ's Asian Pheasant Soup

2 pheasants, skinned, cleaned, and quartered
2 Tbs olive oil
1 quart of chicken stock
1 large onion, chopped
Water to cover
3 carrots, chopped
2 stalks celery with leaves, chopped
5 large mushrooms, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 stalk lemongrass
1 medium ginger root, chopped into 2" pieces

½ tsp red pepper flakes
salt and pepper to taste
1 can coconut milk
chopped cilantro for garnish

Brown the pheasant pieces in olive oil in large pot. Add onions and continue browning. Add water to cover and simmer for 1 hour.

Pull out pheasant, and debone the meat. Chop meat into 1" pieces and return to liquid. (When cutting pheasant, be cautious of Irish Water Spaniels sneaking up behind you.)



checking for seeds in their eyes, ears, and feet, and getting the worst of the mud or dirt off them.

While I'm busy with all that (and anyone who has been out in a field with an IWS knows how long that can take), Russ cooks. And he has some wonderful recipes for wild game birds. We've had a simple roasted chukar, smoked pheasant tamales, and pheasant curry.

One of our favorites is a wonderful Asian-flavored, pheasant soup. Appropriate for us Oregonians, since ringneck pheasants were originally introduced from China into Oregon in the 19th century, their first appearance in the United States.

The first time we tried it, the soup was delicious! Even Cooper and Tooey got a ladleful on their dinner.

Add stock and all the vegetables, garlic, pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Cook until vegetables are tender.

Remove lemongrass and ginger pieces. Add coconut milk and stir. Serve with cilantro garnish.